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The picture is painted with much simplicity of composition, showing the subject at half-length, wearing a black spencer with a wide white ruff, and standing against a background of plain olive-green tones.

Although painted with evident rapidity, it is handled with confidence and definiteness and shows clearly that Frothingham was a close student of the methods of his master. L.P.

CLASSICAL MARBLES IN THE MUSEUM—II

BY L. G. ELDRIDGE

Besides the three pieces of Hellenistic sculpture discussed in a recent number of the *Bulletin*, the Museum also possesses some interesting specimens of purely Roman work.

Long before the end of the second century B.C., after the Greek world had been brought beneath the Roman scepter and Rome had become the chief center of art as of all things else, the activities of sculptors, for the most part Greek sculptors who lived in Rome and worked there for their Roman patrons, became confined largely to copying or imitating earlier Greek statues or well-known Greek types. This activity was really only a continuation of Hellenistic art with its center transferred to Rome, for practically no Roman influence is discernible. The works of these Greek sculptors no longer possess the freshness of originality, and too often they were not even successful as imitations, yet the period is of great value to us as being the only source of much of our knowledge regarding ancient Greek masterpieces. For it was these Greek sculptors working to satisfy the demands of the uncultivated Roman taste, who made a large proportion of the statues that are in our museums to-day.

Now practically all that can properly be designated as Roman sculpture, sculpture which developed in Rome independently of Greek models or Greek influence, consists of works either purely decorative or historical in character. The latter group comprises, besides portraits, chiefly historical reliefs such as those which adorn Trajan's column in Rome. The specimens in the Museum may be said to belong to the decorative class.

First let us look at the garden furniture, now most happily

arranged in the midst of the green of the Court, exactly the sort of setting in which it must feel at home.

Every wealthy Roman citizen of the time of the Empire who made the slightest pretense of being cultured, filled his spacious villa with marble ornaments of all sorts, with copies of ancient Greek statues, if he could not plunder originals, with fountains, benches, tables, etc.

Our pieces of garden furniture come from a villa like this, one that is said to have belonged to a certain Rectina, possibly the wife of the lyric poet Casius Bassus who perished in the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D.

The table, with its rectangular top and its legs composed of the front part of griffins' bodies joined back to back and ornamented at their juncture by floral patterns, is almost perfectly preserved.

The water-basin with the broad flat bowl supported by a kneeling satyr is the most attractive piece in the set. The bowl with its two handles bent upward so as to touch the daintily decorated rim, is of very pleasing proportions. Its flaring foot stands on a capital-like support which, in its turn, rests upon a bulging cushion placed on the satyr's head. From this cushion, which the tiny hands carefully hold in place, folds of drapery fall down the satyr's back. The lithe little creature with supple form and roguish face seems to quite delight in the burden that he has borne for almost two thousand years.

The four herms with their two-faced heads, some male and some female, belong to a class of decorative objects which prevailed both in Greek and Roman times. Originally they possessed a religious significance and were placed before temples and tombs, in front of houses, at crossroads and along highways, and offerings were brought to them as protecting divinities. But later they lost their religious meaning and became purely decorative in character, being employed in courts, in gardens and even inside of houses merely as architectural ornaments. Projections on each side of two of our herms indicate that some architectural feature was at one time attached to them. In the villa of Hadrian near Rome twenty-seven herms were found.

Another typical specimen of Roman sculpture in the Museum is seen in the little stone urn (illustrated page 75). The Romans

devoted special care to the decoration of their funerary receptacles. Sarcophagus reliefs, for example, are among the most numerous remains of Roman sculpture that we possess. The reliefs were usually carved out very deep—this is not true of the reliefs on Trajan's column—often entirely separated in places from the background. This device was resorted to in order to produce a striking effect through the play of light and shade. Floral decorations abounded, especially garlands supported by bicania, rosettes, or other objects. Cupids, too, were frequently employed. It is observed, therefore, that our little urn is a truly characteristic specimen. As was often the case, the urn is made in the form of a house, an imitation of the abode of the living. The roof is carved to imitate tiling and has a winged sphinx at each corner. In the gable is a cupid riding on a dolphin. On the front, below the tablet, two other cupids hold torches twice as high as themselves and support a garland above which are three heads, and below, a pair of doves. At the corners, in front, eagles perch on ornamental pillars, while on each end of the urn is carved in low relief a basket of fruit to which a hare is stealthily helping himself. So we see that in Roman days merry cupids, sportive dolphins, pilfering hares, all sorts of playful creatures, rollicked at random over receptacles which contained the ashes of the dead!

The decoration on the front of the urn is very deeply cut in characteristic Roman style.

Since the tablet which was supposed to bear the name of the deceased contains no inscription, the urn probably never served its intended purpose.

Now that the Museum already possesses specimens of original marble sculpture of Hellenistic and Roman date, we shall hope that works of the classical and the archaic periods will soon be added to the group.



Master Samuel Barber Clark
By James Frothingham (1788-1864)
The John Huntington Collection



Stone Urn, Roman Period
The John Huntington Collection